

Massachusetts

Juvenile Justice Education

Case Study Results

Principal Investigator:

Thomas G. Blomberg
Dean and Sheldon L. Messinger Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Prepared by:

George Pesta
Research Faculty
850-414-8355
gpesta@fsu.edu

The Juvenile Justice NCLB Collaboration Project, with financial assistance from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), is committed to conducting research that improves the quality of education services for juvenile justice involved youth. Toward that end, the project has conducted a case study of Massachusetts and other selected states.

Massachusetts Case Study Findings

I – Purpose

The following report and information was collected through two national surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007, as well as a site visit that occurred March 25th through 27th, 2008. The purpose of the visit was to: (1) determine the research and data capacity of Massachusetts to evaluate its own efforts in juvenile justice education, as well as its current capacity to contribute to a National Information Clearinghouse for the field of juvenile justice education, (2) evaluate the current state of juvenile justice education post-NCLB, (3) assess the implementation of NCLB requirements and determine the extent to which NCLB impacted the services and outcomes of Massachusetts' delinquent population, and (4) determine the impact the Juvenile Justice NCLB Collaboration Project had on Massachusetts' implementation of NCLB.

Section two of this report describes Massachusetts' organizational structure in terms of oversight of juvenile justice education, current agency initiatives, and annual reporting. Section three details Massachusetts' level of NCLB implementation, specifically addressing the requirements of highly qualified teachers, transition services, program monitoring and evaluation, and measuring youths' academic gains and community reintegration outcomes. Section four provides a summary of NCLB's impact on Massachusetts' juvenile justice education services and student outcomes. Finally, table D-2 provides detailed information regarding Massachusetts' data and definitions of measures of youth characteristics, educational services, and student outcomes.

II – Organizational Structure

Massachusetts' operates a large, centralized juvenile justice education system. Juvenile justice youth are served by the Department of Youth Services (DYS), under the state's Office of Health and Human Services. Educational services are the direct responsibility of DYS. DYS education has a large contract with the Massachusetts Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi public workforce agency that provides oversight of the delivery of educational services. The Commonwealth Corporation works directly with the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC), who employs the teachers in 70% of the state's juvenile justice programs. In addition, the Hampshire Education Collaborative (HEC) provides professional development for all juvenile justice teachers. The remaining 30% of teachers are employed by private providers that operate the educational services in some programs. Thirty-nine facilities are publicly operated, while 18 facilities are privately operated through contracts with DYS. Privately operated educational programs are directly overseen by the DYS. Massachusetts' Department of Education (DOE) is directly responsible for educational services for students with disabilities. To accomplish this, DOE assigns special education liaisons and supervisors to work with the juvenile justice education programs.

In FY 2007, DYS had 4,345 newly detained youth and 840 new commitments. These numbers have steadily declined over the last several years. For example, in FY 2003,

there were 5,562 newly detained youth and 1,207 new commitments. Juvenile justice programs include 11 detention centers and 46 residential commitment programs which range in size from 8 to 80 beds. The department serves juveniles under the age of 18 and youthful offenders aged 16 to 21.

State-level education staff includes a director of education, an assistant director of education, and an administrative assistant. The department was requesting an assistant director position. Due to budgeting requirements there are a limited number of full-time positions in DYS education; additional administrative staff work at the Commonwealth Corporation and HEC. Staff includes a director of educational program services, state transition specialist, Title 1 program director, vocational director, director of professional development, and five regional education coordinators. In addition, HEC employs 52 teacher coordinators, five instructional coaches, and ten education liaisons (who assist in transition). There are approximately 235 juvenile justice teachers in Massachusetts.

Juvenile justice education is funded separately from public schools within the state through a DYS line item in the legislative budget. However, the educational budget, with the exception of teacher salaries, is not separate from the department's overall custody and care budget. Federal funds include Title I-Part D and Perkins grants.

Agency Initiatives

Previous barriers to providing quality educational services for incarcerated youth identified by DYS administrators include low teacher salaries, non-certified teachers, inadequate facilities, high staff and teacher turnover, and limited educational resources. To overcome these barriers and improve educational services, DYS had been working on their relationship with the state legislature and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Over the past several years, DYS began using the legislature to improve resources by submitting reports demonstrating current conditions and comparisons of DYS teacher salaries with those of public school teachers. DYS also coordinated with DESE to enhance special education services. With increases in resources, DYS focused on professionalizing the juvenile justice faculty which also positively affected the behavior of line-staff and counselors.

The education unit within the department is focusing efforts on job placement and employment for youth, recruiting and maintaining qualified teachers, improving professional development opportunities, and improving curriculum through enhanced curriculum standards.

Reporting

DYS produces an annual recidivism report to the Commissioner, an outcome report for the Governor's office, and monthly population reports. Currently, DYS does not develop and submit a specific report for education services or outcomes. For details on these measures and for Massachusetts' most recent findings see Table D-2.

III - NCLB Implementation

Highly Qualified Teachers

Youth in juvenile justice programs receive year round (217 of school days) educational services at 27.5 hours per week. The average student-to-teacher ratio in most programs is 8:1; however in a few facilities it can reach as high as 25:1. Although Massachusetts has not currently determined how highly qualified teacher requirements apply to juvenile justice schools, the department has focused their efforts on recruiting and retaining certified teachers, while simultaneously improving professional development opportunities. Over the last couple of years, DYS (through HEC) hired a director for professional development as well as five curriculum coaches to directly support teachers. Teacher training focused on enhancing curriculum standards and differentiating instruction. There are approximately 235 teachers in the DYS education system. In FY 2007, 11% were not licensed, 31% had preliminary licenses, 22% had initial licenses, and 36% had professional licenses. Teacher information is reported by programs to the state education office through spreadsheets and is validated by both DYS and DESE. This information is not available in the department's MIS.

Recruitment and retention efforts have included raising the salaries of juvenile justice teachers to better compete with public school salaries as well increased opportunities for professional development. The increased professional development and support positions are designed to change the culture of isolation that teachers often experience in juvenile justice settings. Salaries have increased from \$33,865 in FY2001 to \$47,000 in FY2007. In addition, the department has created a salary level system that encourages professional certification. Non-licensed teachers make \$28,000, preliminarily licensed \$35,000, initially licensed \$40,000, and \$47,000 for professionally license teachers. As a result of these recent retention efforts, teacher turnover rates have dropped from 44% in FY2004 to 27% in FY2006.

Transition Services

DYS is currently reforming its transition services that support youth who return to school and/or gain employment after release from residential programs. Through HEC, DYS employs a full-time state transition specialist to supervise ten educational liaisons throughout the state.

Transition strategies include focusing on curriculum standards, testing, and graduation requirements that are aligned with public schools and creating a DYS universal transcript to better allow the acceptance of credits in public schools. In addition, DYS developed local memorandums of understanding with larger school districts in the state. Ten educational liaisons are based regionally throughout the state to assist students in returning to school once released from residential programs. Based on feedback from the educational liaisons, the universal transcript has assisted students in receiving more high school credits from public schools. Due to the implementation of the minimum education requirements and the use of educational liaisons, DYS now believes they have more

credibility with local school districts and the number of school districts that are reluctant to accept students back has been significantly reduced. The educational liaisons are not involved in assisting students with gaining employment, but DYS plans to provide this service in the future.

Employment strategies have been focused on funding received from the state legislature in 2006 to address the career readiness and employability needs of DYS youth. The funding was used to develop and implement a pilot program that provided pre-employment training to youth released from residential commitment programs. Partners in the program include local workforce development boards, community and faith-based organizations, and vocational training centers. Two-hundred and fifty-five youth participated and 55% completed the program. Student outcomes included participation in mentoring programs, job shadowing, internships, part-time employment, and full-time employment. However, this recent employment initiative has not been institutionalized and does not serve all released youth. The goal of the department is to link DYS services with local workforce development boards.

Recently, DYS developed a concept paper and model for providing transition services during a youth's incarceration through 12 months post release. The initiative attempts to connect services throughout incarceration and community reintegration while focusing on both return to school and employment. According to several DYS educational administrators, NCLB has been a catalyst in assisting the department in improving transition services for youth.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Juvenile justice education programs are monitored annually using the DYS "Minimum Requirements for Education Standards." The standards consist of 16 basic requirements for facilities, staff, professional development, and class scheduling. In addition, programs annually complete a "field-assessment," which consists of program self-report information regarding educational services. The monitoring is conducted by the Commonwealth Corporation and is limited to a one day walk-through and interviews with key educational personnel at each school. Programs that are found to be out-of-compliance receive technical assistance from DYS and possible follow up visits.

The field assessment tool and Minimum Requirement Standards were developed five years ago and have impacted educational services by making programs aware of basic standards. As a result, some contracts with educational private providers have been canceled through the monitoring process. In addition, the DOE is responsible for providing and monitoring special education services throughout the DYS programs. However, this monitoring has been limited.

Measuring Youths Academic Gains and Community Reentry

The department's Management Information System (MIS) contains information regarding youth placements, crimes, histories, and demographics. However, educational information on teachers and students are not maintained in the department's MIS. DYS

does not have an educational MIS system. Most educational information, such as pre- and post-test scores, GEDs, and teacher qualification data are reported by programs in spreadsheets to the central education office for DYS. With the exception of youth who participated in the recent post-release employment program, the state does not have the capacity to report community reintegration outcomes for education and/or employment.

IV – NCLB Impact Summary

NCLB has had a significant impact on the Massachusetts juvenile justice education system. Although DYS has several initiatives in the early stages of implementation, NCLB has helped the state focus on pre- and post-testing, teacher qualifications, professional development, curriculum standards, and transition services. According to DYS administrators, NCLB has raised the visibility of education within the department and has helped make the argument for better teachers and resources. Using more professional teachers has had the greatest impact as it raises expectations with other line staff, the DOE, the legislature, and the students.

These reforms have resulted in more professionalism and stability in the state’s juvenile justice educational workforce. In addition, resources have been increased including more educational, administrative, and support staff at the state level and educational technology and textbooks at the school level. Anecdotal evidence suggests that more students are returning to school after release. To better determine the impact these reforms have on student outcomes, DYS plans to build a new MIS system that would include education data on student performance and community reintegration outcomes.

The Juvenile Justice NCLB Collaboration Project has distinctly impacted services in the Massachusetts juvenile justice education system. The state’s education director used research conducted by the project and Florida State University’s Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program to advocate with DOE and policy-level administrators for resources and research initiatives such as the UMASS evaluation study. The NCLB Project also resulted in more networking and sharing of information between Massachusetts and other states’ juvenile justice education systems. For example, Massachusetts has discussed the idea of meeting with other east coast states to continue the networking and sharing that has occurred through the NCLB project.

Table 1: Data Measures

Program/School Characteristics
<p>Programs Juvenile justice programs include 13 detention centers, four day treatment programs, and 57 residential commitment programs which range in size from 8 to 80 beds.</p>
<p>Education Services Students in juvenile justice programs receive year round (217 of school days) educational services at 27.5 hours per week. The average student-to-teacher ratio is 8:1.</p>
Youth Demographics and Characteristics

Youth Served

In FY 2007, DYS had 4,345 newly detained youth and 840 new commitments. These numbers have steadily declined over the last several years. In FY 2003, there were 5,562 newly detained youth and 1,207 new commitments.

Age Range

The department serves juveniles under the age of 18 and youthful offenders aged 16 to 21. The average age of youth in the juvenile justice system is 17.

Special Education

In 2006, 45% of the juvenile population was designated special education students.

Length of Stay

Length of stay varies widely depending on the program type and security level. Most programs serve youth for six to nine months. However, deep-end programs may serve youth for more than two years.

Available Demographic Data

DYS maintains demographic data on all youth detained, committed, and on probation. This is reported in quarterly population reports. Based on data from the July 2007 DYS Client Demographic Report, the DYS committed caseload is 85% male and 15% female. The DYS racial breakdown of the committed population is: 37% Caucasian, 27% African-American, 25% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 7% other.

Delinquency

Current and Prior Offense(s)

Current and prior offense information is maintained in the department’s MIS. Types of reconvictions are reported in the annual recidivism report.

Teacher Characteristics

Number and Qualifications

There are approximately 235 teachers in the DYS education system. In FY 2007, 11% were not licensed, 31% had preliminary licenses, 22% had initial licenses, and 36% had professional licenses. Information is currently not sufficient to determine the number of teachers teaching in their area of certification. DYS also maintains teacher retention and turnover information.

Definition of Qualified

Massachusetts has not determined how highly qualified teacher requirements apply to juvenile justice schools.

Source

Teacher information is self-reported by programs to the state education office through spreadsheets. This information is not available in the department’s MIS.

Where Reported

Teacher qualification information and retention rates were reported in the UMASS

<p>evaluation report. Currently, teacher data is not reported annually.</p>
<p>Diplomas/GEDs</p>
<p>Current Findings In FY2006, 76 committed youth earned a high school diploma, and 127 youth earned a GED.</p> <p>Data Source Numbers of GEDs and diplomas include youth in residential commitment programs as well as youth on parole. Youth in DYS remained enrolled in their public school while in residential care. Public schools issue grades, credits, and diplomas. In addition, annual state test scores remain attached to the public schools students were enrolled in prior to commitment in juvenile justice program. Programs that are able to offer GED testing self-report the number of youth who earned a GED while incarcerated. Case-workers self-report GEDs and high school diplomas earned while youth are on parole.</p> <p>Where Reported The most recent information is reported in the UMASS evaluation study.</p>
<p>Testing</p>
<p>Current Findings Pre- and post-testing in residential facilities began in October 2007. First year results were not available.</p> <p>Definition Massachusetts uses the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for pre- and post-testing youth in residential commitment facilities.</p> <p>Data Source TABE results are not part of the MIS. Programs submit spreadsheets monthly to the state education director’s office.</p> <p>Where Reported Not currently reported.</p>
<p>Recidivism</p>
<p>Current Findings According to the agency’s 2007 recidivism report (a release cohort from 2003), 32% were convicted of a new crime within 12 months of release.</p> <p>Definition Massachusetts defines recidivism as conviction in the adult system (both misdemeanors and felonies) within 12 months of release from the department’s services (at age 18 for juveniles and age 21 for youthful offenders). Until the age of 18 or 21 the department revocates youth who are not complying with probation regulations. This is a separate measure from recidivism.</p>

<p>Data Source Revocation information is maintained in the department’s MIS. For conviction into the adult system, the department matches their data to the Department of Corrections.</p> <p>Where Reported Reconviction information is reported annually in the department’s Juvenile Recidivism Report.</p>
<p>Return to School</p>
<p>Current Findings Not Available</p> <p>Definition NA</p> <p>Data Source DYS has made unsuccessful attempts to secure state education data from the Department of Education to determine the post-release school performance of DYS youth.</p> <p>Where Reported Not currently reported.</p>
<p>School Performance Post Release</p>
<p>Current Findings Not Available</p>
<p>Employment</p>
<p>Current Findings The “Bridging the Opportunity Gap Initiative” served 255 youth released from residential programs. The employment program had a 55% completion rate. While in the program, 21% of youth participated in monitoring, 9% in job shadowing, 73% in internships, 36% in part-time employment, and 4% in full-time employment.</p> <p>Definition Findings are based on a special employment report conducted in 2006-2007. The 255 youth served by the program do not represent all youth released from residential commitment, and employment activities were tracked while youth were participating in the employment program.</p> <p>Data Source Special report from the Commonwealth Corporation “2006-2007 Bridging the Opportunity Gap: Job Readiness and Employment Initiative”</p> <p>Where Reported DYS does not annually report post-release employment data. However, in 2006-2007 the Commonwealth Corporation implemented an employment initiative and conducted an employment study on a portion of released youth.</p>

Employment Performance Post Release
Current Findings Not Available